MORMONISM AND ITS AUTHOR;

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OR,

A STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINES

OF THE

"LATTER-DAY SAINTS."

BY THE

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"There shall arise false christs, and false prophets."
MATT. xxiv. 24.

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MORMONISM AND ITS AUTHOR.

THERE is at present a sect of people called "Latter-Day Saints," who have succeeded in prevailing upon many simple persons to join them, and to leave that good old Church, which is commonly known as the Church of England. Now as these "Latter-Day Saints" teach and preach many things which are contrary to the truth, and as I am a minister of Christ, bound by my Ordination Vows "to be ready to drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines," it is of course my duty to guard my parishioners and others against being led astray by the false teachers in question.

It has come to pass, in the course of Divine Providence, that although I am now the pastor of an English congregation, I have become well acquainted with the early history of the "Latter-Day Saints;" and have seen and conversed with their "prophet," at the head-quarters of their sect in Western America. And, in consequence of the information which I have thus obtained, I do not merely *think* the religion of the "Latter-Day Saints" to be erroneous, but I absolutely *know* that it is founded upon a base and vile imposture.

Now, perhaps, some people on reading this will say that I am very uncharitable in making such a positive assertion; and in passing so severe a judgment on the religion of persons, many of whom may be sincere, and well-meaning, and anxious to serve God. But, I would say in reply, that with the knowledge which I possess on the subject, I should be showing a great want of charity to my countrymen, if I willingly

suffered them to think well of the "Latter-Day" doctrine. Nor have they any right to call me their Enemy, because I tell them the Truth. And I pray God that all sincere persons who may read these pages, may be protected from the snares of the real Adversary of their souls, and enabled to view the teaching of the "Latter-Day Saints" in its true light, namely, as a mere cheat and delusion, pernicious to man, and hateful to God.

The "Latter-Day Saints" are the same with the Mormonites or Mormons. The Mormons take their name from the "Book of Mormon," a foolish and absurd book, published originally at a place called Palmyra, in America, by an American, named Joseph Smith, who described himself in the title-page as its "Author and Proprietor." This person gave out, that he was a prophet of God, like Isaiah or Jeremiah, Ezekiel or Daniel. He told a wild story about an angel appearing to him, who directed him to dig a hole in a certain hill. He said, that he dug in the ground accordingly, and found a book, the leaves of which were thin plates of gold covered with letters belonging to an unknown language. He further said, that God enabled him to turn these letters into English, and that he thus produced the book which is called the "Book of Mormon." But when he was asked to show the Golden Book itself, he said that God would not allow it to be seen. He was, however, very glad to sell copies of his "Book of Mormon" at a dollar a piece, or four-and-sixpence of our English money. I have in my possession a copy of the first edition of this book, *with all its original errors*[1].

Most persons agreed in thinking the story about the Angel and the Golden Book, a mere trick to persuade people to buy the "Book of Mormon." But some were also found who believed the story, and were glad to pay their money for a book which, in their simplicity,

[1] For an account of the supposed *origin* of the "Book of Mormon," as well as a synopsis of its contents, the reader is referred to "The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century," published by Messrs. Rivington.

they considered to contain the Word of God. These people thought a good name better than a bad one, and therefore called themselves "Latter-Day Saints," though others usually call them Mormonites or Mormons. They also put their trust in Joseph Smith, and believed whatever he and his preachers thought fit to teach them.

In the year 1842, Joseph Smith was living at a place called Nauvoo, in the State of Illinois, and on the banks of the great river Mississippi. He had declared, that God had appointed Nauvoo to be the place of gathering for the "Latter-Day Saints." He had by these means collected together eight or ten thousand people from different parts of England and America. I resided at that time between two and three hundred miles from Nauvoo; but, although the distance may seem considerable, I did not object to the expense and trouble of the journey, in order to see the strange man who called himself a prophet. I also desired to find out what arguments he used, to lead people to believe him to be sent from God. And, as he had given out that God had inspired him with an understanding of unknown tongues, I fixed upon what I considered a very fair method of putting him to the proof.

I had in my possession (and have still), a curious and ancient book written with pen and ink on leaves of parchment. This book contains the Psalms of David, and a few other portions of the Bible. The whole of it is in the Greek language, and in letters which (comparatively) few people are able to read. I took this book with me, and set out on my expedition to the town of Nauvoo.

Having reached my journey's end, I went on Tuesday, April 19, 1842, to call upon the aforesaid Joseph Smith. I met him at a short distance from his own house, in company with a good many of his followers, who were aware that I intended to exhibit a wonderful book to their "prophet." The appearance of

Joseph was very far from saintly; and, indeed, conveyed the idea of a knave, much more than of a prophet. He seemed very coarse and clownish, and certainly had not the open and straightforward look which we naturally expect to see in an honest man. On entering his house, chairs were provided for Joseph and myself, while a good many "Latter-Day Saints" stood round, anxiously expecting to hear their prophet explain the meaning of the book. I then placed the book in his hands, and said, that, as I had been told that he was a prophet of God, gifted with the power of understanding unknown tongues, I hoped he would explain its contents. He asked me if I had any idea of its meaning. I replied, that I believed it to be the Psalms of David in Greek. "No," he said, "it ain't Greek at all; except perhaps a few words. What ain't Greek is Egyptian; and what ain't Egyptian is Greek. This book is a Dictionary of Egyptian Hieroglyphics." He then said, that the letters in the book were "like the letters that were engraved on the plates of the Golden Book[2]."

I might go on to mention a further conversation which I had with Joseph Smith; and I might describe how suddenly he took his departure, when he began to suspect that I knew a little more than he at first imagined. I might also state the conversations which I held with some of the Mormons, in Nauvoo, in order to convince them that Smith had proved himself to be a deceiver. But the fact which I desire to be particularly noticed is, that the Founder of Mormonism, the Head of the "Latter-Day Saints," boldly and confidently pronounced a part of the Holy Bible to be a Dictionary of Egyptian Hieroglyphics.

Now this certainly goes a great way to prove that Joseph Smith could not have been a prophet of God, nor even a good man. If he really possessed the

[2] A further account of this interview with the false prophet will be found in the "City of the Mormons," a small book published by Messrs. Rivington in 1843.

power which he claimed, of reading books in ancient tongues, he would have been likely to know the true Bible, even though written in Greek; and, since he said that the letters of the book were like those written on the golden plates, it would have been all the easier for him to understand them, because, by his own account, he had translated the writing on those plates by the help of God. But, most surely, if he had been a good man, he would have honestly confessed that he did not know the meaning of the book which I showed him; and would not have positively said to me and to the Mormons who were standing by, that the Psalms of David were an Egyptian Dictionary. How foolish, then, it is, for any person who knows this fact, to believe his story about the Angel and the Golden Book.

Thus far I have given my own testimony as to what I myself saw of the false prophet, and heard from his own lips, within his own house. And this testimony helps to destroy the very foundation on which the "Latter-Day" doctrine is built; namely, the real inspiration of Smith, and his supernatural gifts. For if Smith was an impostor, as very plainly appears, then, the "Book of Mormon" is an imposition, and the "Book of Covenants," and other "Latter-Day" Writings, are a mass of blasphemous rubbish. Nothing then remains to the "Latter-Day Saints," but those doctrines of the good old Christian Church, which have been mixed up with Mormonism, in order to give it currency, and to make it look respectable.

But, besides what I saw of the "prophet" myself, and heard from his lips, I made many inquiries in the neighbourhood of Nauvoo, from which I satisfied myself, that Joseph Smith was even more wicked than I could have supposed. And although it is not in general a Christian duty to speak ill of any one, especially after he has gone to answer for himself before his Judge, yet, in the case of a deceiver, whose lying doctrines are perverting thousands from the

right way, the ordinary course of duty is reversed. And, since our Saviour has told us to "beware of false prophets," and has also said, "by their fruits ye shall know them[3]," I think it right to show the character of the fruits, that is, of the actions, of Joseph Smith. I am bound to add, that I have good reason to believe in the truth of the following allegations.

1st, then, Smith was a *Profane Swearer.*

Some of the English people, who had been tempted by the Mormon preachers in England to become "Latter-Day Saints," and to emigrate to Nauvoo, became very wretched after they arrived there, because the "prophet" had got possession of their money, and had left them in poverty and want. Smith then told them that "it was no use whining, and that they might go back again to England, and be damned." Another time, being angry with some of his people, he told them that "they were a damned set, and God should damn them, so help him Jesus Christ; that he meant to go on as he had begun, and take his own course, and kill and destroy." He added, "that they might think that he was swearing, but that God Almighty would not take notice of him in cursing such a damned set as they were." For this and further testimony, on oath, to the "prophet's" profanity, the reader is referred to a document, ordered to be printed by the American Government, Feb. 14, 1841. 26th Congress, 2nd Session, 189, page 14.

2ndly, Smith was a *Covetous Man.*

For proof of this I may refer to the "Book of Covenants," one of the Mormon Oracles, written in a great measure by Smith, and published under his sanction. In this book it is written, in the name of the Lord, "It is meet that my servant Joseph Smith should have a house built," page 214. "Provide for

[3] Matt. vii. 15, 16.

him food and raiment, and whatsoever he needeth," page 129. "In temporal labour thou (Smith) shalt not have strength, for this is not thy calling," page 111. "It is wisdom in me that my servant, Martin Harris, should be an example unto the Church, in laying his monies before the bishop of the Church [meaning Smith]. And also this is a law unto every man that cometh unto this land to receive an inheritance, he shall do with his monies according as the law directs," page 144.

It was by such false "revelations" as these, that Joseph Smith defrauded the simple English people, who were enticed to join him in America. And it is well known that by such artful tricks he became possessed of much money and other property.

3rdly, Smith was a *Drunkard.*

A shop for the sale of ardent spirits having been established at Montrose, a small place opposite Nauvoo, over the river, the "prophet" was often seen intoxicated there by persons who mentioned the fact to me. In September, 1841, Smith got drunk at this shop, and boasted to the people who were looking on, that he could "drink them all drunk." Another time, having been discharged from arrest, on a charge of high treason against the Commonwealth, through an informality in the writ, he gave a party at a place called Monmouth, and, after a regular frolic with his lawyers and friends, became thoroughly drunk. When he was asked how it was that he, "a prophet of the Lord," could get drunk, he answered, that it was necessary that he should do so, to prevent the "Latter-Day Saints" from worshipping him as a god. About the year 1840, at a political meeting in Nauvoo, Joseph became intoxicated, and was led home by his brother Hyrum. On the next Sunday, he acknowledged the fact before his assembled congregation. He said that he had got drunk on purpose, for the following reason. Several of the elders had got

drunk, and had never made a confession; but he had got drunk in order that he might confess it publicly, and set a good example to the elders.

4thly, Smith was a *Thief.*

It is written in the Mormon "Book of Doctrine and Covenants," page 156, "Behold, it is said in my laws, or forbidden to get into debt to thine enemies; but, behold, it is not said, at any time, that the Lord should not take when He please, and pay as seemeth Him good: wherefore, as ye are agents, and ye are on the Lord's errand, whatsoever ye do according to the will of the Lord, is the Lord's business, and He hath sent you to provide for his saints[4]." Now, surely, taking the property of another is stealing: and the doctrine of Joseph Smith consequently sanctioned stealing. This was also confirmed by a Mormon teacher, in a discussion at Oldham, who said, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord's, and of course belong to his saints;" leaving it to be inferred that, according to Smith's doctrine, a "Latter-Day Saint" needing a horse, might claim him as the Lord's horse, or a sheep, or cow, in the same way. (See "Mormonism Exposed.") I was informed by a gentleman in Montrose, that a robbery having been committed by some "Latter-Day Saints" on a person in the neighbourhood, Smith mentioned the robbery in a sermon which he preached, and said, that "he did not care how much was taken from that person." He pretended to quote the example of Christ and the Apostles, who, he blasphemously said, never scrupled to steal corn in the fields when they were hungry[5]. He said also these words, as I was

[4] This passage is quoted with the bad grammar contained in the original.

[5] This act of the disciples (Matt. xii. 1) was permitted by the law of Moses (Deut. xxiii. 25); and therefore the Pharisees, when speaking against them (Matt. xii. 2), do not accuse them of theft, but only of breaking the Sabbath by doing it on that day.

informed by one who heard him; "The world owes me a good living: if I cannot get it otherwise, I will steal it; and catch me at it, if you can."

The Mormons have complained of the severe persecutions, which they sustained from their enemies in Missouri and Illinois. But is it to be wondered at, that their neighbours should be afraid of Smith's doctrines, which authorized theft and other crimes under the cloak of religion? Is it not plain, that the persecutions of the Mormons were not persecutions "for righteousness' sake[6]," but the direct contrary? And when the wrath of an American community was once roused, and the Mormons were driven out of neighbourhoods which loathed them, we can scarcely wonder, however we may regret, that the innocent should often have suffered for the guilty, and that women and tender babes should have shared in the punishment designed for guilty husbands, fathers, or teachers?

5thly, Smith was an *Adulterer.*

Some of his doctrines led directly to the breaking of the seventh commandment, especially his doctrine of Spiritual Wives. There is evidence, that, early in his career, he was heard to say, that "adultery was no crime." Afterwards he taught a system of polygamy, which seems to have been one of the more secret doctrines of Mormonism. If there be any truth in human testimony, it is certain that he practised adultery himself; and secured his victims by persuading them that he was directed by a special revelation from God. For proof of this, I refer to the affidavits of Melissa Schindle, Martha H. Brotherton, and others; which, however, for obvious reasons, cannot be given in this place.

6thly, Smith was (as we have good reason to believe) a *Murderer.*

[6] Matt. v. 10.

He taught, that it was lawful for him to kill his enemies, "even as Moses killed the Egyptian, and hid his body in the sand[7]." (See the document published by the American Government, quoted before, page 47.) It appears from the same authority (page 33) that he said, that "any person who spoke or acted against the presidency of the Church (meaning himself), should leave the country or die." But, above all, it is written in Smith's "Book of Doctrine and Covenants," page 218, "Nevertheless, thine enemy is in thine hand, and if thou reward him according to his works, thou art justified; if he has sought thy life, and thy life is endangered by him, thine enemy is in thine hand, and thou art justified."

Acting on this principle, it appears that he really sought the destruction of several persons who had opposed him, and whom he considered his enemies. At the time of his death, he was in prison on several charges of being concerned in murder. It was this which stirred up the minds of men in America against him, far more than his *profanity*, or his *covetousness*, or his *drunkenness*, or his *thievishness*, or his *adultery*. And as it was generally believed that the jury before whom he would be tried, would consist chiefly of Mormons, who would be sure to acquit him (as on former occasions), a mob of people resolved to take the law into their own hands, according to Smith's own doctrine in the "Book of Covenants" quoted above. The furious multitude went to the prison, opened the doors, and put the false prophet to death, not on account of his religion, but for his crimes. Thus, an infamous and wicked impostor was himself unlawfully slain. It is said, that when life appeared extinct, a young man stepped forward from among the mob, and standing over the body of the false prophet,

[7] Exod. ii. 12. It appears from Acts vii. 23. 25, that Moses acted by a special command from God, and by this deed gave the people a sign that he was appointed to deliver them.

stabbed him several times with a long knife, to make sure of his death, saying, at the same time, "You murdered my father." (See Brotherton's Mormonism, page 15.)

Now, I would ask this simple question, Is it probable that God would choose a villain like Joseph Smith to be his prophet, and to be the means of communicating a new revelation to the world? God's prophets have indeed been men, and therefore, imperfect beings; but, in the general course of their lives, they have been holy men. But Smith, from first to last, was, it appears, a deceiver, a blasphemer, a swindler, a drunkard, and a thief. During the latter part of his life he was certainly an adulterer, and probably, also, a murderer.

There are, I know, people who will believe any thing. I met with persons at Nauvoo, who were perfectly acquainted with the wickedness of Smith, and did not even pretend to deny it, who yet professed to believe firmly that he was a true prophet. I trust, however, that few who read this little tract will be found so destitute of common understanding; and that most of my readers will put some confidence in me, who have proved Mormonism, and found it to be an imposture. I utterly deny that Joseph Smith was *a Prophet sent from God.*

I believe, indeed, that many of the English Mormons, after their arrival in America, have had sense enough to see through the iniquity of Mormonism, and renounce it altogether. I am willing to admit, likewise, that many of the earlier Mormons, in America, were, like those in England, merely dupes, whose ignorance of the religion of the Church of Christ exposed them to the craftiness of the false prophet. But I believe, that the *leaders* of the Mormon sect have been, from the very first, people of the worst character; atheists in religion, and utterly corrupt in practice. Not the least of their iniquities is, that they have perverted the Scriptures, which

refer to Zion and Jerusalem, and have profanely applied them to America. Thus, they have induced many persons, expecting the coming of Christ, to go to America, and to buy land in the Mormon territory of people interested in the speculation. Multitudes, indeed, of industrious English, men and women, have thus been fleeced of their hard earnings, while worthless fellows in America, who have agreed to call themselves apostles, live upon their spoils in idleness and vice.

And, next, I am far from justifying the atrocities which, in many instances, were undoubtedly committed by mobs, against some of the more innocent of the Mormons, in America. The Mormon teachers have endeavoured to make it appear from my books (entitled the "City of the Mormons," and "The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century,") that I wish to excuse these acts of violence and crime. On the contrary, I regard them with abhorrence: although the guilt of them must for ever rest chiefly on the author of those infamous doctrines and practices, which, especially in a democratic and unsettled country, could hardly fail to excite the passions of their neighbours. The death of the false prophet was certainly a dreadful event, and the authors of it were undoubtedly murderers. But an ordinary death could hardly have been anticipated for one who had taught the lawfulness of murder, had systematically lied in the name of the Holy Ghost, and had committed the dreadful sin, of sanctioning his own abominations by pretended revelations from heaven.

And, further, I may be permitted to state my opinion, that the progress of Mormonism in England, is to be ascribed, in a great measure, to the following causes:—

1st, Ignorance of the real grounds of religious belief; and, 2ndly, An appetite for something strange, exciting, and marvellous.

The friends of true Christianity, it appears to me,

should aim at diffusing not only general intelligence among the people, but a sound understanding of those great principles, which the "Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15,) has constantly maintained. The community should learn to respect *antiquity* and *authority* more, and to trust the judgment of *individuals* less. They ought to know, too, that the Bible itself is a collection of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek books, which, without the aid of human learning to translate and explain them, would be of no benefit to the ordinary reader. They would thus perceive the immense importance of a learned clergy, well instructed in antiquity, in languages, and in the difficult science of interpretation. And they would, consequently, despise the ravings of those untaught and self-appointed teachers, who "rush in where angels fear to tread."

Since, too, Mormonism seems to feed the appetite for the marvellous, I think it highly desirable, that the people should be clearly taught how truly wonderful the ministerial system of the Church is, when correctly apprehended. The minister of Christ stands before his flock, not as a mere teacher of religious opinions, but as an "ambassador for Christ [8]," and "a steward of the mysteries of God [9]." To him belongs the due performance of that holy ordinance, wherein the children of men are made "members of Christ, and children of God." He is appointed to administer that Bread and Wine, which (to those who partake rightly) become, spiritually, the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. He is charged to declare the Absolution of the penitent, to reject evil livers from sacred mysteries, and to exercise all needful and salutary discipline. He is, under God, the friend of the poor, the instructor of the ignorant, the comforter of the afflicted, of the suffering, and of the dying. And this Minister is part of a great system which has come down from the beginning of Chris-

[8] 2 Cor. v. 20. [9] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

tianity. He repeats and teaches the same *Scriptures*, the same *creeds*, the same *prayers*, the same holy *hymns*, which have been repeated and taught for fifteen or eighteen hundred years. He has himself received his commission to minister, not from any earthly prince or potentate, nor from any temporal legislature or parliament; but from those whose appointment has, in fact, descended through long antiquity, from the laying on of Apostolical hands.

Such a view of the Christian Ministry is indeed wonderful, with the additional recommendation of Truth. What are the miserable theories, however marvellous, propounded by the "Latter-Day Saints," in comparison with this?

So the Church doctrine of the Incarnation, properly stated, is the right antidote to the Mormon doctrine of a *material Deity*. And is not the "One Baptism for the Remission of Sins," as taught in the Nicene Creed, fully as *interesting* as the "Latter-Day" doctrine on the same subject?

And to those of the labouring classes who desire *emigration*, there are many settlements in our own colonies which offer at least as fair inducements as the establishment of the speculating Mormon apostles in Deseret.

To my fellow-countrymen generally I would say, —Do not suffer the preachers and teachers of the "Latter-Day" doctrine, to impose upon you. They will, perhaps, say very little to you about Joseph Smith; and will keep out of sight, for a time, the "Book of Mormon," and the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants," lest you should be shocked by the folly and wickedness of those books. They will talk of miracles, and prophecies, and revelations, and will try to make you believe, that they alone are in the possession of the light, and that the Church of England is all in darkness and unbelief. But recollect, that the "Latter-Day" doctrine began with Joseph Smith, and is built upon his assertions. If,

therefore, he was an impostor, as I have proved, the whole falls to the ground.

And, lastly, do not suffer yourselves to be led away from the Church, even though the Church should be called to pass through fiery trials for her correction and purification. Rather let it be your endeavour to understand and appreciate the wonderful system of the Church in which you were baptized. In the Church of England you will find enough to edify and interest you, if you will look beyond its outward form, as an establishment, and study it inwardly as a part of the great Catholic Church of Christ. In that Church you have at least plain, honest, and sound instruction, which does not, in any way, seek to maintain itself by lying prophets, or by deceptive signs and wonders. The worship of the Church of England is scriptural in its doctrine and in its language, and most holy and edifying to those who really join in it with a purpose of devotion. If religious difficulties perplex you, if the arguments of false teachers harass and distract you, recollect that, under God, the minister of your parish is the person to whom you ought to apply for information and instruction. Open your mind and heart to him, in full confidence, as to the minister of Christ, and the probability is, that he will very speedily put you in a way which will lead you to comfort, confidence, and satisfaction.

THE END.

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